REPORT OF AID

GIVEN TO

DESTITUTE MOTHERS AND INFANTS

IN

1891.

We testify to the need of this charity, and believe that the money given to it will be faithfully and judiciously expended.

W. L. RICHARDSON, M.D.,

Physician of Boston Lying-in Hospital.

CHARLES P. PUTNAM, M.D.,
Physician of Mass. Infant Asylum.

CLARA J. ALEXANDER, M.D.,

Resident Physician N. E. Hospital for Women.

REPORT.

100

This work was begun in 1873, a little over eighteen years ago.

The primary object is to assist a mother to keep her infant in her personal charge, and by temporary aid to help her to become permanently self-supporting, when (without such help) she might be obliged either to give her child up for adoption or place it at board where it might perhaps be neglected. This includes, as a secondary object, some supervision of infants. The mother is our first interest; but we think we assist her best by helping her to faithfully care for her child.

Married and unmarried mothers are equally included in this charity. The only condition of receiving help is that a mother shall love her infant and desire to keep it with her and work for it.

The principal characteristics of our work are as follows:—

I. We are not a society. Our active working force consists of three persons, who give to it the larger part of their time. Working as private individuals, they are able better to enter into personal relations with those whom they help. There is also the advantage of being free to adapt themselves to the peculiar needs of each woman assisted, who is herself regarded as an individual and not as a member of a class.

- 2. The work is done without an institution. However necessary a building and board of officials may be for some charities, we think that we work to better advantage without these appliances; and we are also able to accomplish more with less expense than if we had an establishment to maintain.
- 3. The help given in money is intended to be temporary, and to place each individual in a position where she may become self-supporting as soon as possible. Some of our mothers receive but little help in money, others *none*; but each has what she needs of advice and assistance.
- 4. This is, perhaps, the most important feature of our work. An unmarried mother is helped, not on the ground that she has "fallen," but because she is a *mother*, anxious to earn her child's support, and to act the part of a good mother toward it. This avoids stamping a well-meaning girl as a member of a degraded class.

During the earlier years of our work we placed a great many infants at board, the mother visiting her child weekly, and either paying the whole or a proportion of its board. We find it a better plan to let the mother take a place as domestic in a small family in some country town, where her child is allowed to remain with her, in consideration of a reduction in wages. The demand for domestic service in country towns is so great that a moderately competent woman can earn in this way \$1.00 to \$2.50 a week (we have one young woman on our list who earned \$3.50); and, as she avoids the expense of paying her child's board, it is a more advantageous arrangement than earning higher

wages and having to pay board out of them. The child, too, acquires a good home; and the family of the employer often become very fond of it, so that permanent good grows out of the arrangement.

A question often asked in regard to these young girls is, "Do you succeed in reforming them?" The question is difficult to answer, because, as our charity does not include the depraved, the word "reform" does not exactly express our object. It is true that these young girls have taken one wrong step. It is true that some of them are in danger of sinking lower. From this danger we wish to save them. The experience of eighteen years has convinced us that the best way to do this is to encourage a mother to keep and care for her infant.

Some of these young mothers are comparatively innocent girls, who have suffered from a want of protection, and dangerous circumstances, rather than from evil tendencies. The larger part are of a somewhat lower grade than this, yet not depraved, but ignorant, weak, thoughtless, undeveloped. The reason and conscience are in embryo, and cannot be relied on as a guiding principle. To take her infant from a young girl of this type is to leave her with an empty house, "swept and garnished," ready for the evil spirits to come in and take possession. Suffering from a sense of betrayal and desertion, smarting under the injudicious reproaches of her relatives, weighed down by disgrace, and too often cast off by those nearest to her, it is a period of great danger. Unless the "aching emptiness" is filled with something wholesome and pure, she is too likely to seek distraction in dangerous and even sinful pleasures. It

is just at this point that the guardian angels of love and work stand ready to shield her. All we have to do is to work in harmony with them, and not resist the wise Providence that gives to a feeble infant such wonderful power to save.

There is a healing influence in wholesome work; but a thoughtless, undisciplined girl finds steady work an intolerable burden except when exerting herself for the child that she loves. There is no such education as this for the mind, heart, and character. She needs our care and help in various ways where her own ignorance and inexperience must be supplemented; but the infant is her real teacher and safeguard.

Out of many interesting cases, we select a few for mention. A great many might be described by simply saying, "We sent her to a situation, and she has done well."

- r. Irish. A young girl, apparently indifferent to her child. Discouraged and desperate, she gave away her 3 weeks' old baby to a woman who promised to get it adopted, but who left it in a doorway. The mother was found and brought to us. The shock of learning the baby's fate awakened the maternal instinct. She became extremely fond of it. We placed her with it, at work, in a family, where she has done remarkably well.
- 2. American, 19 years old. This young girl had been married to a husband who turned out badly, and deserted her, leaving her with two young children. She seemed embittered and heartless toward her baby, and gave it to a woman, who, on being paid \$15, promised to get it adopted. On hearing from us the story of the baby mentioned above, she was struck with remorse, hastened to reclaim her child, and has been ever since a devoted mother. She works in a family, and has one child with her, paying the board of the other, with a little help from us. She expresses intense gratitude to us for leading her to reclaim her baby.

(We have known in past years of three other discouraged mothers, who gave away their infants when they were about a month old to women who promised, for money, to find them homes. All three repented, and came to us, begging us to get their babies back, which we succeeded in doing with the help of the police. Two of the babies had been left on doorsteps on winter nights. These mothers have since been devoted to their children. We still know of them now, many years later than the circumstances mentioned.

We desire to call attention to the point that often a deserted infant is abandoned not by its mother, but by some woman who has promised, for money, to have it adopted.)

- 3. Irish. Taken early in 1888. We sent her with her infant to a situation in the western part of Massachusetts. She remained there about two years, until the death of her employer. We then sent her to a family in Maine. Here she has been for the last two years, with an aged couple, doing all the work of the house, and acting as house-keeper.
- 4. American. Taken in 1889. She has been from the first with a family in a country town near Boston. After working in this place for about eighteen months, she became restless, evidently needing a change. It was arranged that she should come to Boston and spend a week. She was so much refreshed and benefited by having this change, and some innocent recreations and amusements that were provided for her, that she returned to the same place, and has remained there another year.
- 5. Swede. Taken in the spring of 1890. We happened to have a good situation ready for her at the moment. She went to it at once, taking her child with her, and has remained there ever since. The family have written to us, expressing entire satisfaction with her.
- 6. Irish. A rough girl, rather unprepossessing. She was taken in charge early in 1891. She has needed a good deal of help in the way of advice, care, and finding situations for her, but has been entirely self-supporting, so far as money is concerned; and we have no serious fault to find with her behavior.
- 7. Swede. Taken early in 1891. Cast off by her relatives. She had a married sister, who said, "If my husband knew the circumstances, it would destroy the harmony of our home." We took her from the City Hospital, where she had gone for some illness. She

was then so depressed that it seemed as if her mind were affected. She has been in our care a year, has supported herself and child entirely after the first few weeks, and seems like a wholly different person.

- 8. Irish, 18 years old. Brought to us early in 1891 by a Sister of Charity. She had come to Boston from a neighboring town, alone, only a few days before her infant was born. She thought at first she could not possibly care for it, but soon grew so fond of it that she could not bear to give it up. Her mother, at first disposed to be harsh toward her, relented, and took both her daughter and the infant home.
- 9. Irish-American. Taken in 1890. Then 21 years old. Her father was very angry with her; but, as her mother was kindly disposed and willing to receive her, it seemed best for her to live at home and obtain employment near by, working by the day and going home at night. She writes to us and comes to see us, and we give her occasional presents of clothing for herself and the baby. We give extracts from her letters:—
- "April 5, 1891. Dear Friend,—I received your letter. I think what you said about the book is a good idea [we had advised her to keep an account-book], and I must say you are very kind to me. I shall go in to see Miss —— on Thursday, as it is my day off; and, if it is pleasant, I will bring the baby with me. If you will let me know when you would like to see me, I will come any time. I have Sunday and Thursday afternoons, and mother will take care of baby. I thank you very much for your kindness to me, for you and Miss —— are the best friends I have outside my own family."
- "June 11, 1891. My dear Friend,—I thank you very much for the book you sent me. It is a very nice one. I must tell you and Miss —— that the baby had the measles, and he got over them nicely. I stopped at home with him until he was all better, for he was pretty sick with them; and, besides, he is cutting his teeth, and he has six teeth now, so I think he is getting along splendid."
- 10. American. Taken in the spring of 1890, then 19 years old. She had been for a time at the Massachusetts Infant Asylum as wet-nurse, and, when her services were no longer needed there, came to us. Her child was then 5 months old. She has needed very little help in money; but we have found situations for her, she

keeping the child with her, and supporting him and herself for the last two years.

MRS. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.
MRS. W. C. WILLIAMSON.
MARY R. PARKMAN.
LILIAN FREEMAN CLARKE.
NANCY W. COVELL.

Subscriptions may be sent to Mrs. James Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass., or to Dr. C. P. Putnam, 63 Marlborough Street, Boston.

To prevent inconvenience, we add that the ladies who carry on this charity are not able to see applicants at their homes.

Miss Parkman may be seen on Mondays and Thursdays, at Room 48, Chardon Street Building, 2.30 to 4.30 P.M.

Miss Clarke or Miss Covell will be at 29 Fayette Street every Thursday, 2.30 to 4.30 P.M., and at the New England Hospital every Monday at the same hour.

MOTHERS ASSISTED DURING 1891.

Old cases (continued from 1890), 91 New cases (first taken in 1891), 175	NATIONALITY OF NEW CASES.
Whole number assisted in 1891, 266	(Married.)
	American,
Married women (new cases), . 58	Irish,
Unmarried women (new cases), 117	Irish-American,
175	British Provinces, 4
Married women (old cases), 24	German, 4
Unmarried women (old cases), 67	Scotch,
Offinatived women (old cases), . 67	English,
91	French,
NATIONALITY OF OLD CASES.	Colored,
	Unknown,
(Married.) American, 4	
7.1.1	, and the second se
Irish,	NATIONALITY OF NEW CASES.
British Provinces,	
English,	(Unmarried.)
Colored,	American, 20
Swedish, 2	Irish, 24
German,	Irish-American,
Scotch,	British Provinces, 24
_	English, 5
24	Scotch,
NATIONALITY OF OLD CASES.	Swedish, 6
(Unmarried.)	Colored, 4
American,	French,
Irish,	German,
Irish-American,	Dutch,
British Provinces, 9	Norwegian,
English, 3	Portuguese,
Swedish, 2	Unknown, 3
German, 2	117
Colored,	11/
German-American,	American, 20
Unknown, 9	Other nationalities 97
67	117

AGES OF NEW CASES.	22 years old
(Unmarried)	23
14 years old,	24 " " 9
15 " " I	25 " " 9
16 " " 3	26 " " 6
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	28 " " 6
18 " "	29 "
	30 " "
	30
· ·	** 1
21 " "	Unknown, 5
	117
RECEIVED D	OURING 1891.
On hand Jan. 1, 1891 \$431.87	Mrs. E. L. Motte, \$3.00
Mrs. Geo. Baty Blake, 20.00	Miss Laura Norcross, 10.00
Mrs. S. Parkman Blake 10.00	The Misses Paine, 10.00
Mrs. W. S. Carter, 5.00	Miss M. R. Parkman, 10.00
Miss C. H. Clarke, 5.00	Miss A. Q. T. Parsons, 5.00
Mrs. E. C. Clarke 10.00	F. H. Peabody, 20.00
Dr. A. Coolidge, 10.00	Mrs. D. L. Pickman, 25.00
Mrs. C. A. Cummings, 5.00	Dr. W. L. Richardson, 50.00
Mrs. C. P. Curtis, 20.00	Mrs. R. S. Russell, 10.00
Mrs. J. F. Curtis, 10.00	Miss Marian Russell, 25.00
Mrs. James C. Davis 5.00	Mrs. G. Howland Shaw. 10.00
Mrs. Otto Dresel, 2000	Mrs. Henry S. Shaw, 10.00
William Endicott, 100.00	Mrs. C. F. Shimmin 10.00
Mrs. George Faulkner, 10.00	Mrs. P. R. Walbach, 10.00
Mrs. James T. Fields, 10.00	Miss M. A. Wales, 20.00
Miss Matilda Goddard 20.00	Miss M. S. Walker, 50.00
Miss Harriet Gray, 25.00	Mrs. C. E. Ware, 100.00
Mrs. Horace Gray, 25.00	Mrs. S. D. Warren, 50.00
Mrs. W. B. Greene 100.00	Mrs. William F. Weld 50.00
F. L. Higginson, 400.00	Miss Amy White, 5.00
Mrs. D. P. Kimball, 100.00	Mrs. J. Huntington Wol-
Miss Anna C. Lowell, 100.00	cott, 25.00
A. L. Lowell, 15.00	W., 25.00
Mrs. George G. Lowell 10.00	A friend, 100.00
Mrs. John Lowell, 10.00	A friend,
Arthur T. Lyman, 50.00	A friend, Christmas gifts 2.86
Mrs. G. von L. Meyer, 100.00	A friend,
Dr. F. Minot, 5.00	

DONATIONS OF CLOTHING.

Mrs. W. S. Carter.	Miss R. P. Wainwright.
Mrs. E. C. Clarke.	A friend.
Mrs. A. S. Porter.	. Boston Sewing Circle, by Miss
Mrs. J. H. Morison.	Loring.
Mrs. George Faulkner.	Benevolent Committee of Church of
Mrs. William Parsons.	Disciples.

DESTITUTE WOMEN AND INFANTS IN ACCOUNT WITH ANNA H. CLARKE, Treasurer.

Dr. To board of women, . \$592.11 Board of infants, . 619.33 Clothing of women, . 155.96 Clothing of infants. 176.80 Milk and food, . 174.08 Fares and travelling. 164.37 Advertising, 65.63 Medicine, 8.47 Printing, . 32.90 Sundries, 151.96 Total expended in 1891, \$2,136.26 Salary of Miss Covell (gift of Mrs. W. B. Greene). 522.00 5% railroad bond bought, 973.06 345.91 \$3,977.23 Cr. Jan. 1, 1891, by cash on hand, \$431.87 1,913.36 60.00 Railroad bond, drawn and paid, 1,050.00 Gift of Mrs. W. B. Greene, for salary of Miss Covell, . 522.00 \$3,977.23